

I'm excited to report that this week the House of Representatives passed my Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act (H.R. 1053), by a bipartisan vote of 418-1. I introduced the bill at the beginning of the 111th Congress and it would streamline the monitoring and coordination of the Bay restoration efforts amongst 10 federal agencies, six states and the District of Columbia, over one thousand localities and multiple non-governmental organizations.

Currently, the complexity and number of folks involved in the process has failed to produce significant results. Passage of this legislation is by no means the only effort necessary to renew the health of the Bay. However, it is the down payment we vitally need to accomplish this effort.

My bill would fully implement two cutting edge management techniques, crosscut budgeting and adaptive management. Neither technique is currently required or fully utilized in the Bay restoration efforts, where results have lagged far behind the billions of dollars spent. Both methods required by the bill have been used successfully in complex restoration efforts in the Everglades, the Great Lakes and the California Bay Delta.

Additionally, my bill requires the Environmental Protection Agency to appoint an Independent Evaluator to review and report on restoration activities, and the integration of adaptive management and other initiatives suggested by the Chesapeake Executive Council. The evaluator would report findings and recommendations to Congress every three years.

I was overwhelmed by the amount of support of that this vital legislation received throughout the legislative process. The passage of this bill is a testament to the fact that bipartisanship isn't dead. Legislators have come together from across the aisle to highlight the vital role the Bay plays in the daily lives of citizens throughout the watershed and to ensure its recovery. I have great hopes that the same spirit will be carried over to the Senate and I'm working to ensure its swift passage.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first*

*full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*